



DATE: June 25, 2008

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ADEQ Director Owens Awards \$168,442 Grant to Audubon Arizona to Support Rio Salado Center and Help Improve Water Quality in Phoenix

PHOENIX (June 25, 2008) – Arizona Department of Environmental Quality Director Steve Owens announced today that ADEQ is awarding a \$168,442 grant to Audubon Arizona to support the Nina Mason Pulliam Rio Salado Audubon Center and help improve water quality in Phoenix through public education.

“Audubon Arizona is doing a spectacular job preserving the Rio Salado area and educating people about the importance of the river, the wetlands and the habitat there,” Director Owens said. “Because the Center is located on the 600-acre Rio Salado Habitat Restoration Area, it provides a perfect setting for city residents to learn about surface water, and we are very pleased to support this important effort.”

The project will encourage residents in South Phoenix and Central Phoenix to take steps to reduce water pollution through means such as limiting use of fertilizer, storing chemicals appropriately to reduce runoff, properly disposing of pet waste, and replacing impenetrable surfaces with more porous materials where possible.

During the two-year grant period, about 7,000 people are expected to participate in the program, which will be conducted at the Nina Mason Pulliam Rio Salado Audubon Center, 2439 S. Central Ave. The center is located on the banks of the Salt River just a mile south of downtown Phoenix.

“Everyone should visit the center and learn about the importance of protecting this special local resource,” Owens said.

In addition to paying for printed educational material, the ADEQ grant will enable Audubon Arizona to conduct educational programs and self-guided walks through the center’s two acres of wetland along the Rio Salado area, erect informative signage along the pathways; provide; a “water quality backpack” with materials for simple water quality experiments; and initiate presentations on water quality by naturalists and trained volunteers.

The grant is funded with federal dollars provided to ADEQ under the Clean Water Act.